

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 20 AUGUST 2019**

**ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT – 1 APRIL 2018 – 31 MARCH 2019**

**REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this report is to highlight the complaint statistics and satisfaction for 2018/19 and to ensure members that learning is being taken to ensure the effectiveness of the complaints handling within Angus Council.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Scrutiny & Audit Committee consider:-

- (i) the key performance indicators on complaints closed between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019;
- (ii) the results of the satisfaction survey sent to everyone who made a complaint which was closed during 2018/19 and
- (iii) the complaints received by Service area as detailed in the Report.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcome contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

- **Angus is a safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable community.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

Since 1 April 2013, the council has been operating the new Complaints Handling Procedure for Local Authorities as required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

During 2018/19 a total of 312 complaints were recorded as closed off during the year.

**4. COMPLAINT ANALYSIS**

In respect of the Stage 1 complaints received:-

- An increase in the number of complaints upheld from 67 (28.4%) in 2017 to 76 (30.5%) in 2018/19
- A decrease in the number of complaints not upheld from 101 (42.8%) in 2017/18 to 99 (39.8%) in 2018/19; and
- An increase in the number of escalated complaints from 16 (5.3%) to 21 (6.6%) in 2018/19.

In respect of the Stage 2 complaints

- A decrease in the number of Stage 2 complaints from 51 (16.8%) in 2017/18 to 47 (14.8%) in 2018/19
- An increase in the number of Stage 2 complaints upheld from 7 (13.7%) to 9 (19.1%); and
- An increase in the escalated complaints form 16 in 2017/18 to 21 in 2018/19

SPSO guidance states that Stage 1 complaints should be dealt with within five working days and Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days.

- In 2018/19 140 Stage 1 complaints (56.2%) were closed within five working days compared to 135 (57.2%) in 2017/18.
- 22 Stage 2 complaints (46.8%) were closed within the 20 working days compared to 30 (58.8%) in 2017/18.

A full copy of the indicators is attached at [Appendix 1](#).

## 5. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY SERVICE AREA

| All Council Complaints  | Stage 1    | Stage 2   | Escalated from 1 - 2 | Total 2018/19 |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------|
| <b>Total complaints</b> | <b>249</b> | <b>47</b> | <b>21</b>            | <b>317</b>    |

### COMPLAINTS BY SERVICE AREA – STAGE 1

| Directorate                               | Upheld | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Not Corporate Complaint | Total      |
|---|--------|------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Angus Alive                               | 28     | 14         | 17               | 0                       | 59         |
| Angus Health & Social Care Partnership    | 7      | 6          | 5                | 0                       | 18         |
| Schools                                   | 5      | 12         | 18               | 0                       | 35         |
| Corporate Finance                         | 2      | 5          | 4                | 0                       | 11         |
| Legal & Democratic Services               | 1      | 1          | 0                | 0                       | 2          |
| Children & Young People                   | 1      | 5          | 3                | 0                       | 9          |
| Housing                                   | 5      | 18         | 4                | 0                       | 27         |
| Housing, Regulatory & Protective Services | 17     | 30         | 15               | 0                       | 62         |
| Infrastructure                            | 3      | 8          | 4                | 0                       | 15         |
| Business Support (Place)                  | 6      | 0          | 4                | 0                       | 10         |
| HR, IT, Corporate Comms & OD              | 1      | 0          | 0                | 0                       | 1          |
| <b>Total Stage 1 Complaints</b>           |        |            |                  |                         | <b>249</b> |

## COMPLAINTS BY SERVICE AREA – STAGE 2

| Directorate                               | Upheld | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Not Corporate Complaint | Total |
|---|--------|------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Angus Alive                               | 0      | 1          | 2                | 0                       | 3     |
| Angus Health & Social Care Partnership    | 1      | 0          | 1                | 0                       | 2     |
| Schools                                   | 1      | 4          | 5                | 0                       | 10    |
| Legal & Democratic Services               | 1      | 2          | 1                | 0                       | 4     |
| Children & Young People                   | 0      | 5          | 2                | 0                       | 7     |
| Housing                                   | 1      | 3          | 0                | 0                       | 4     |
| Housing, Regulatory & Protective Services | 1      | 9          | 0                | 0                       | 10    |
| Infrastructure                            | 1      | 4          | 0                | 0                       | 5     |
| Chief Executive                           | 0      | 2          | 0                | 0                       | 2     |
| Total Stage 2 Complaints                  |        |            |                  |                         | 47    |

## ESCALATED COMPLAINTS BY SERVICE

| Directorate                               | Upheld | Not Upheld | Partially Upheld | Not Corporate Complaint | Total |
|---|--------|------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Angus Alive                               | 0      | 2          | 1                | 0                       | 3     |
| Angus Health & Social Care Partnership    | 0      | 1          | 0                | 0                       | 1     |
| Schools                                   | 1      | 2          | 2                | 0                       | 5     |
| Corporate Finance                         | 0      | 0          | 2                | 0                       | 2     |
| Children & Young People                   | 2      | 1          | 0                | 0                       | 3     |
| Housing                                   | 0      | 2          | 0                | 0                       | 2     |
| Housing, Regulatory & Protective Services | 0      | 0          | 2                | 0                       | 2     |
| Infrastructure                            | 0      | 2          | 0                | 0                       | 2     |
| HR, IT, Corporate Comms & OD              | 0      | 0          | 1                | 0                       | 1     |
| Total Escalated Complaints                |        |            |                  |                         | 21    |

### 6. SATISFACTION WITH THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

Indicator 7 of the Performance Management Framework requires councils to report on customer satisfaction with complaints process. To achieve this, we issue satisfaction surveys six weeks after the complaint has been closed to all complainers. Sixteen completed questionnaires were returned in 2018/19.

The results for 2018/19 are shown in the table below. Given the survey sample consisted entirely of people who had made complaints about the council, the majority of which were not upheld, it is not surprising that there are high levels of dissatisfaction.

| <b>1. Is our complaints handling procedure easy to follow?</b> |                         |                       |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Answer Options</b>  | <b>Response Percent</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
| Yes  | 57.14%                  | 8                     |
| No   | 35.71%                  | 5                     |
| Unaware of complaints handling procedure                       | 7.14%                   | 1                     |
| Other (please specify)   |                         | 0                     |
| <i>answered question</i>                                       |                         | <b>14</b>             |
| <i>skipped question</i>  |                         | <b>2</b>              |

| <b>2. If the investigation into your complaint took longer than 20 working days, did the council keep you informed on the progress of your complaint?</b> |                         |                       |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Answer Options</b>   | <b>Response Percent</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
| Yes   | 40.0%                   | 6                     |
| No  | 20.0%                   | 3                     |
| Not applicable  | 40.0%                   | 6                     |
| Other (please specify)  |                         | 0                     |
| <i>answered question</i>  |                         | <b>15</b>             |
| <i>skipped question</i>   |                         | <b>1</b>              |

| <b>3. Did we address all the issues raised in your complaint?</b> |                         |                       |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Answer Options</b>   | <b>Response Percent</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
| Yes   | 25.0%                   | 4                     |
| No  | 75.0%                   | 12                    |
| Other (please specify)  |                         | 0                     |
| <i>answered question</i>  |                         | <b>16</b>             |
| <i>skipped question</i>   |                         | <b>0</b>              |

| <b>4. Were you satisfied with the quality and clarity of our response?</b> |                         |                       |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Answer Options</b>  | <b>Response Percent</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
| Yes  | 31.25%                  | 5                     |
| No   | 68.75%                  | 11                    |
| Other (please specify)   |                         | 0                     |
| <i>answered question</i>   |                         | <b>16</b>             |
| <i>skipped question</i>  |                         | <b>0</b>              |

| <b>5. Did we treat you fairly when dealing with your complaint?</b> |                         |                       |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Answer Options</b>   | <b>Response Percent</b> | <b>Response Count</b> |
| Yes   | 50.0%                   | 8                     |
| No  | 50.0%                   | 8                     |
| Other (please specify)  |                         | 0                     |
| <i>answered question</i>  |                         | <b>16</b>             |
| <i>skipped question</i>   |                         | <b>0</b>              |

| 6. Even if you did not agree with the outcome, overall how satisfied are you that we handled your complaint well? |                  |                |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options  | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Very satisfied  | 6.25%            | 1              |
| Fairly satisfied  | 12.50%           | 2              |
| Neither satisfied or dissatisfied   | 6.25%            | 1              |
| Fairly dissatisfied   | 18.75%           | 3              |
| Very dissatisfied   | 56.25%           | 9              |
| Other (please specify)  |                  | 0              |
| <i>answered question</i>  |                  | <b>16</b>      |
| <i>skipped question</i>   |                  | <b>0</b>       |

\*The percentages in this table may not add up to 100% in each question due to some people having answered more than one option.

| 7. If you would like to make any further comments or suggestions, please do so. |                |
|---|----------------|
| Answer Options  | Response Count |
|   | 13             |
| <i>answered question</i>  | <b>13</b>      |
| <i>skipped question</i>   | <b>0</b>       |

| 8. Date feedback form completed |                  |                |
|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options                  | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Date                            | 100.0%           | 16             |
| <i>answered question</i>        |                  | <b>16</b>      |
| <i>skipped question</i>         |                  | <b>0</b>       |

## 7. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

Each Service has been asked to identify and act on the key learning points from the complaints received about their service.

A number of key learning points have resulted in the council improving the way they do things including:-

- Revised procedure for the triage of playground accidents
- Staff reminded of the importance of open and responsive communication with clients
- Staff reminded of the need to enter data correctly onto systems
- Staff reminded for the need to write in plain English

Whilst the number of complaints continue to increase it must be acknowledged that there are fewer staff within the council to both respond to issues timeously and to investigate complaints. Every effort will be made in 2019/20 to ensure that timescales are met despite the competing demand for officer's time.

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **9. CONSULTATION**

The Depute Chief Executive, Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**MARGO WILLIAMSON  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Elaine Whittet  
**EMAIL DETAILS:** [WhittetE@angus.gov.uk](mailto:WhittetE@angus.gov.uk)

**Appendix 1 – Complaints Management Reporting – Performance Indicators**